

NAMING

553 Among the Tanala Menabe naming practices vary somewhat with the gens. In the Zafakotry gens the child receives a name two days after birth. There is no ceremony for this. This first name may refer to the day on which the child was born, or may be that of an ancestor on either side. If ancestral, it is usually changed in case of illness, on the principle that the ancestor is failing to guard his namesake properly. At about the age of puberty the individual [581] takes a permanent name, always that of an ancestor. Several persons usually take new names together, so as to utilize a single sacrifice and save expense. This name is rarely if ever changed.

In the Manandriana gens young children are called *dady*, bee or, if boys, *pelika*, terms corresponding in a general way to our own "baby." A regular name is usually given from six months to two years after birth, but girls sometimes grow up and even marry without receiving more than a nickname. Children are always named after ancestors on either the father's or the mother's side, the two families disputing for the honor. Names already borne by the living are usually avoided, but there is no absolute prohibition. In some cases an ancestral name of good omen is selected by means of the *alidy* ("divination").

Several children are named at once. An ox is killed and the sacrificial parts cooked and offered to the ancestors in the village square, not at the sacred place. The invocation is the same as that for ordinary sacrifices, except that the ancestors whose names are being taken are specially invoked and asked to guard their namesake. The regular sacrificial priest presides. After the ceremony there is an informal feast.

The name taken at this time is usually kept for life, but an adult may change to another ancestral name if he wishes. To do this he makes a sacrifice, followed by a feast in the village at which the change is formally announced. After this it is bad manners to address him by the former name. A change of this sort will be made through a desire to honor some particular ancestor, as a grandfather, not to avert bad luck.

No information was obtained on naming among the Tanala Bongo.

CARE OF INFANTS

954 The Tanala are extremely fond of children and take the best care of them possible with their limited knowledge of hygiene. Babies are

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kept clean, being bathed at least once a day with cold water. Very small children are carried in the arms almost constantly, husbands and older children doing their share. From the age of about four months on, the child is carried in the back of its mother's dress (see Costume). It is supported by the belt about her waist and sits with its legs on either side of her body and its head and shoulders protruding above the garment. It is protected from sun and rain by a small mat hung about her neck. These baby covers are always made by the women themselves and it is impossible to purchase one which has been in use, although this seems to be only a matter of sentiment on the mother's part. The child remains on the mother's back except at night or when it is being nursed. I have often seen women with children on their backs working in the fields, the baby sleeping soundly although its head was jerked to and fro by her movements. Children continue to be carried for some time after they can walk.

No clothing is worn under the age of about three years. Even when carried on the back, there is no equivalent for the European diaper. As soon as the child begins to be carried in the mother's dress it is slapped for befouling her and it learns to control its functions at a surprisingly early age. This was the only offense for which I ever saw a Tamaia child punished.

Nursing seems to be continued as long as the mother's milk holds out, although the infant is given a little rice or other soft food as soon as it will take it. There is no idea of regularity in feeding and the child is given the breast whenever it cries. It is generally believed that a new pregnancy has a bad effect on the health of the child just older. As many mothers are still nursing when the pregnancy begins, this belief probably has a sound basis of fact, but they ascribe the poor health of the older child to its jealousy of the coming one.

Infant mortality is extensively high and even prior to European contact the population must have remained almost static. No statistics are available but practically every family I knew had lost one or more children in infancy. The greatest loss seems to be from intestinal diseases, but small children also suffer from malaria. Adults, on the other hand, appear to be almost immune as long as they remain in their own districts. When they go elsewhere, they are liable to contract it, although usually in a milder form than European.

CIRCUMCISION

All males are circumcised, but there is no corresponding operation for females. The circumciser is a professional, but the trade is not